

STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION AND PUBLIC INPUT

Stakeholder representation and public input was critical to the Missouri process. Currently, the division maintains a list of stakeholders that we communicate with via our Special Education and First Steps list serves. Representatives were included throughout the process. Details are provided at the major steps in the process.

Steering Committees

- **Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)**
The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Since May 2001, they have addressed the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) as a part of every agenda. The entire committee served as the steering committee for Part B. Their role in the process was to oversee the process and participate on cluster subcommittees.
- **State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)**
The State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) is required by IDEA. They meet approximately six times per year. The SICC were stakeholders in the First Steps redesign process. In discussing the CIMP process with them, the consensus was that since they were actively involved in the Task Force to design the new system, a subcommittee to work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on the CIMP process would be reasonable. This subcommittee was comprised of SICC members. Their role was to become knowledgeable about the process, suggest existing data to be used in subcommittee reports review the draft reports and report back to the SICC.

Cluster Area Subcommittees Part B & C

Each cluster area committee had the following participant categories: parent/advocate, LEA administrators, teachers, stakeholders, advisory panel and DESE staff. Participants were assigned to committees of their choice and then remaining slots were filled with a balance of the participant categories. A complete listing is available in the appendix.

Data Collection

As a result of the cluster area committees the division gathered additional public input to address the components and indicators.

- **Focus Groups**
Focus groups were conducted in eight locations throughout Missouri. St. Louis City, Springfield, Rolla, Pattonville, Raytown, Chillicothe, and Cape Girardeau were selected to provide a statewide geographic representation. Focus groups were designed for parents, secondary students, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) administrators and school administrators. Three teams made up of two Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC) representatives conducted the focus groups. A DESE staff person initially contacted a representative, usually a special education director, at each of the selected areas requesting that a chosen individual work with GLARRC to set up the logistics of the focus groups. The special education directors agreed to provide locations for the focus groups and also to make arrangements to have the students available for the student focus groups.

DESE provided GLARRC with a mailing list and labels for all the principals and early childhood special education administrators in Missouri. To achieve a balance of

elementary, middle, and secondary principals, GLARRC staff selected labels from each focus group area as they sent out letters of invitation to the principals.

GLARRC staff also selected labels for the early childhood special education administrators and sent out the letters. GLARRC staff called MPACT, Missouri's Parent Training and Information center, to request that MPACT either furnish labels for parents in each area or have MPACT send out the letters of invitation. MPACT decided that they would affix labels to letters if GLARRC would furnish the letters of invitation in stamped envelopes. MPACT staff members were very willing to cooperate.

Those parents who were available to answer the GLARRC phone calls or who called back the phone number that was left on the messages were really interested in the focus groups. They were eager to have the opportunity to participate in an activity that gave them the opportunity to provide input on their experiences and to get some questions answered that would be of value to them. However, a number of the parents had activities that conflicted with the dates and times of the focus groups so they were not able to participate. Ninety parents participated in the focus groups.

The letters of invitation were sent out just a short time prior to the dates of the focus groups. Because of that, a number of principals and early childhood special education administrators called to say that although they were really interested in participating, they would not be able to attend due to conflicting priorities. Forty-three early childhood special education administrators and sixty-eight principals participated in the focus groups.

The special education director at each location arranged to have secondary students available for the focus groups. A requirement was that each participant had to have a permission slip from his/her parents to participate. Permission slips did not go out in a timely fashion in one location so only students 18 and older who wanted to participate and could sign their own permission slips participated. A total of 109 students participated.

- **MSIP Questionnaire**

The Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) Parent Advanced Questionnaires were completed in the spring and fall of 2001. These questionnaires were disseminated to parents of children enrolled in a set of sixty-two school districts undergoing MSIP accreditation reviews in the 2001-2002 school year. Districts were identified by MSIP for the first year of the cycle and were geographically located throughout the state. These districts are an administrative subset whose characteristics are not significantly different from the population of 524 school districts statewide.

The results are based on a total of 52,573 parent questionnaires that were returned. One of the questions identifies parents with children who receive special education services. Of these 52,573 parents, about seven percent (just over 4,000) identified themselves as having at least one child receive special education services.

- **Parent Survey**

The parent survey was a telephone survey drawn from a sample of Missouri districts. A total of 637 parents of children with disabilities were sampled from more than 6,400 student records. These 637 parents were contacted via phone between June 3 and June 17, 2002. A total of 254 parents from thirty-two school districts completed the survey for a response rate of 37.9 percent. Districts were selected according to their urban and rural status and their percentage of minority students. Districts then supplied the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED) with rosters. During the selection process, problems with the rosters were identified to include inaccurate phone numbers, names and students that had exited the system. Prior to the survey parents were sent a letter informing them of their selection and asking for their participation in the survey.

- **Student Survey**

The student survey was a mail survey sent to a sample of special education students aged 16 and older. These students were drawn from the sample of districts used in the phone survey. A total of 252 surveys were mailed, but only 22 were returned. Because of the small sample, the data was not analyzed. The low response rate indicates that a different method should be employed to gather this information.

Systems Redesign

- **Part C Redesign**

The First Steps Redesign Task Force included a total of 42 members representing the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC), Early Intervention Providers, Division of Special Education staff, Early Intervention Liaisons, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Social Services (DSS), the director of Early Childhood for DESE, families, legislators, school districts and physicians.

- **Part B Monitoring Redesign**

As a result of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, the implementation of the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) Continuous Monitoring Improvement Plan (CIMP) and the beginning of the third cycle of the Missouri School Improvement Process (MSIP) in 2001-2002, the Compliance section of the Division of Special Education in the spring of 1998 convened a group of stakeholders. This group of school administrators, special and regular educators, parents, advocates and State Department staff reviewed the current special education monitoring process and made recommendations for the future of those activities.

- **Parts B and C Database Development**

The cluster committees made numerous requests for data that the State Education Agency (SEA) had in hard copy files. Based on the types of requests made by the committees, the Special Education Data Coordination section worked with the Compliance and Effective Practices sections to develop databases to better organize the information maintained at the SEA level.

Report

- **Design Team**

Comprised of three Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) members who were all parents of children with disabilities and three Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) staff and two Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC) representatives.

- **Report Review and Adoption**

Draft copies of the entire report were mailed to all SEAP and State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) panel members. GLARRC met with the SEAP on October 4, 2002, to adopt the report. The SICC subcommittee met with representatives of DESE on October 7, 2002, to adopt the report.

- **Dissemination**

The final copy of the self-assessment will be available on the Division website. Messages will be sent via the two major Division list serves, SELS and First Steps, to notify all stakeholders of the report's availability.